

Key Messaging (2022-02-04):

- The Alberta RCMP continue to act to preserve the peace, maintain public safety and ensure the flow of traffic at the Coutts border crossing.
- This is a dynamic situation that we are managing. For this reason, and to maintain operational integrity, we are unable to answer all questions however can assure you that we continue our efforts to maintain public safety and to respond to this unlawful event.
- In all situations like this, we always start with open lines of communication. We utilize our Community Conflict Management Group (CCMG) – a group of Alberta RCMP Officers specially trained as mediators who help to peacefully resolve disputes between different groups.
- Anytime there is a reasonable chance of achieving a resolution through dialogue, that is preferable to enforcement.
- We are aware there are blockades / protests around the Province and we are monitoring those situations and deploying resources as needed to ensure public safety.
- We understand the frustration this blockade is causing – I can assure you that we are continuing to work to resolve.

Q&As:

Why was this event treated differently than indigenous protests?

- We have strong relationships with Indigenous Communities in Alberta.
- In all situations like this, we always start with open lines of communication. We have utilized our Community Conflict Management Group (CCMG) in the past— a group of Alberta RCMP officers specially trained as mediators who help to peacefully resolve disputes between different groups.
- Every situation will be different and the dynamics can change quickly.
- Anytime that there is a reasonable chance of achieving a resolution through dialogue, that is preferable to enforcement.

What about the indigenous protests at railways in Alberta that the RCMP responded to?

- In 2020, our police records indicate there were two reports at Alberta railways in Alberta RCMP jurisdiction that involved Indigenous protestors and in both cases the RCMP engaged in dialogue which resolved the situation at hand.
 - One railway blockade was on the outskirts of Edmonton, RCMP members were called first to respond and negotiated with the indigenous protestors before turning the situation over to other police who had jurisdiction over the area. (*Refer 2020235375: 2020-02-19 In relation to the Wet'su'weten support*)
 - In another case on the Sisika Nation, a protest was to occur and the RCMP proactively engaged the Band Council and developed a plan to allow protestors voices to be heard. No protest occurred. (*Refer 2020229775: 2020-02-18 Sisika Nation*)

What about the indigenous protests in B.C. (or other locations in Canada) that the RCMP responded to?

- I am not in a position to answer that because that incident was outside of our jurisdiction. *Refer them to appropriate branch of the RCMP to respond.*

Why haven't there been any arrests yet?

- We are focused on ensuring there is clear passage on the highways, that everyone is safe.
- We hope to turn this into lawful protest that doesn't impede transportation.

Are you in control of the situation?

- Yes, we are in control.
- We have many resources focussed on resolving this situation as quickly as possible.

How many resources do you have on the ground?

- I can't give you an exact number as that changes based on the need. Again, this is a very dynamic situation.
- We have adequate resources in place to address this issue.
- We are bringing in resources from British Columbia to provide additional support (they are here to backfill so the public order team get rest).

Are you aware of the other protests / blockades popping up around the province?

- Yes, we are monitoring this activity closely and are prepared to respond if necessary.

If you don't take action, don't you think this protest will grow?

- Citizens are always allowed to participate in peaceful and lawful protests. However, should any individual cross into criminal activity, we will enter into an investigation. We continue to ask people to stay away.

Do we need the military to come in?

- Those decisions are made at a much higher level. However, I can personally say that the Alberta RCMP have this matter in control.

Are we seeing confederate flags / swastika's like in Ottawa?

- None

What can you tell us about the second illegal protest at the check point on Highway 4 and Hwy 501?

- Southbound and Northbound lanes are open and its has generally remained peaceful.

Why aren't you towing?

- As you can understand, moving a large volume of oversized vehicles from the roadway is not an easy task. A number of options have been, and continue to be, considered as we work to bring this to a lawful event.
- Towing large vehicles present at the two protest sites requires specialized pieces of equipment. We continue to resource that equipment; however, we also prefer those vehicles to be moved under their own power.
- We will acknowledge that some companies have communicated their concerns in working with us in this political climate. However, our preference is always for these vehicles to move under their own power.
- In cooperation with the protesters, the Alberta RCMP have been able to keep at least one lane open north and southbound lanes to and from the border.

Why is the Alberta RCMP allowing fuel delivery to protesters?

- Denying fuel access would cause many of the larger vehicles to suffer mechanical issues. This would necessitate towing them from the scene, which would be an extensive undertaking.
- If vehicles are unable to operate, they will become increasingly difficult to relocate. This would only further complicate an already complicated situation.
- Alberta RCMP will continue to allow the delivery of fuel onto the protest sites. Many people are living in their vehicles as they occupy the area, and we are still experiencing cold evenings and strong cold winds from the mountains. Our top priority is to maintain the safety of all involved. To deny these individual fuel jeopardizes their means for survival.
- Furthermore, some of the larger vehicles would suffer severe mechanical failure should they their engine run dry while idling. That would necessitate towing them from the scene while we prefer they move under their own power.

Why has enforcement started today and not earlier?

- Frankly, negotiations with this group of protestors has failed. Anytime there is a reasonable chance of achieving a resolution through dialogue, that is preferable to enforcement.

If people are protesting peacefully, why is enforcement action being taken?

- The Alberta RCMP respects the public's right to peaceful protest.
- This has been an unlawful protest from the beginning.
- When a protest is unlawful, police are obligated to take enforcement action to maintain public safety.
- While current protests remain peaceful, they are impeding public traffic and therefore deemed unlawful.
- We have taken, and continue to take, many steps to move this protest from an unlawful protest to a lawful protest.

What will enforcement look like? What penalties will people face? Will there be criminal charges?

- There are a number of investigations underway that we are unable to share specifics on at the moment.
- Enforcement may include charges and arrests for traffic violations.
- Throughout this protest our officers have been working to maintain public order and uphold the law. Since XXX, officers in the area issued XX traffic violation tickets and X 24-hour impaired driving suspensions.

Under what authority are you allowed to seize these vehicles or arrest these people?

- These individuals obstructed a highway and prevented vehicles from accessing an international border and important trade corridor.
- Under Section 2 of the *Critical Infrastructure Defence Act*, we are given powers of arrest and we can seize these vehicles as evidence. [Note: we will not be utilizing the Proceeds of Crime legislation for the seizure of these vehicles]

Was yesterday's traffic accident in Brooks a result of the convoy?

- This incident is illustrative of how large, slow moving convoys can greatly reduce the safety of our provincial highways.
- Travelling at the posted speed limit is meant to maintain the free flow of traffic, and will reduce the chance of other motorists growing impatient with delays in their travel.

- Even on four lane highways, motorists are urged to be extra cautious when passing slow moving vehicles. They could be slowing down for a hazard which may affect you.
- Fortunately, this incident did not have a more severe outcome.

What happens to people who continue to protest following enforcement?

- The RCMP respects the right of everyone to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.
- If individuals are protesting in a lawful way, they can continue to do so.

Why did the police escort the convoy up QEII on Saturday?

- The RCMP did not escort the convoy.
- The RCMP was in the area to ensure everyone's safety.

How were resolutions met?

- Questions regarding the protest resolutions should be directed to the Government of Alberta.

Why did RCMP arrest Personal Info. rather than protesters at the blockade?

- In the interest of preserving peace and maintaining public safety, Personal Info. was arrested.
- Personal Info. was not only in breach of his conditions but his presence at the unlawful protest in Coutts also served to escalate an already tense situation.

Media Lines

General Racism Line:

- The RCMP has a bias-free policing policy. Bias-free policing means equitable treatment of all persons by all RCMP employees in the performance of their duties. If an individual believes they were treated in a manner that is not in the spirit of the Bias-Free Policing policy, or believe an RCMP employee did not conduct themselves appropriately, they are encouraged to follow the public complaints process.

General protest line:

- The proper use of police discretion is a valid, appropriate approach to de-escalating situations. The proper exercise of police discretion should not be confused with lack of enforcement. Police may wait for a lower-risk opportunity to arrest offenders rather than inflame a situation.
- The RCMP acts to preserve the peace and maintain public safety, within its jurisdiction.
- Our goal for any protest or demonstration is to utilize a measured approach. Extensive efforts are taken to engage with all stakeholders in the hopes that a peaceful resolution can be reached.
- The RCMP will use only the level of intervention necessary to ensure the safety of all citizens and to maintain peace, order, and security. The use of force is always a last resort.

Use of Force:

- Our members are placed in dynamic, escalating situations every day and are required to make split-second decisions. While we never want to have to resort to physical altercations, it is an unfortunate necessity of our job. However, there are limits to our actions, and we hold our employees to those limits.

- We expect our police officers to rely on their training and use intervention methods that are reasonable and appropriate based on their individual risk-assessment during incidents where an individual may cause harm to themselves or others.
- Reviews conducted are dependent on the level of force; the file may be reviewed at the detachment level, senior management at HQ, or it may be referred to the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) for an independent review.
- The Incident Management Intervention Model (IMIM) is the framework used by RCMP officers to assess and manage risk in all encounters with the public. Whether it's the simple presence of a police officer, communication or verbal de-escalation, or the use of an intervention option.

Lines for speaking to media about people leaving/enforcement:

General:

- Over the past week, the Alberta RCMP has acted to preserve the peace, maintain public safety and ensure the flow of traffic at the Coutts border crossing.
- As individuals at the Coutts border crossing exercised their right to peacefully protest, they were overall cooperative with law enforcement and adhered to traffic laws.
- We are pleased to announce that resolution has been met and the Coutts border crossing is now clearing and will soon be operating at full capacity.
- Traffic flow for goods and services across the border, as well as for residents in the surrounding area will resume as normal shortly.
- We are grateful to the public for their patience and cooperation as we have worked to maintain order during this past week's events. Thank you.

Enforcement:

- Over the past week, the Alberta RCMP has acted to preserve the peace, maintain public safety and ensure the flow of traffic at the Coutts border crossing.
- Up to this point, individuals at the Coutts border crossing have been cooperative with law enforcement while exercising their right to peacefully protest.
- However, as the last of protesters have failed to disband and continue to impede traffic, the Alberta RCMP is turning to enforcement in order to ensure the border crossing is cleared and can resume to normal traffic flow.
- In situations such as this, Alberta RCMP's first resort is always open lines of communication to peacefully resolve any disputes. If there is a reasonable chance of achieving a resolution through dialogue, that is preferable to enforcement.
- Our goal for any protest or demonstration is to utilize a measured approach. Extensive efforts are being taken to engage with the remaining protesters in the hopes that resolution can be reached.